

IN THE CLAIMS:

Complete listing of the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A work flow system for circulating a digital document file to a plurality of clients through a network, comprising:

a transmission client for initially issuing a document file for circulation, further comprising:

a) a setup processing ~~means for setting~~unit which sets destination information to specify destination and order of circulation, and

b) a transmission processing ~~means for sending~~unit which sends a circulation information file, including said destination information, and said document file to the next one of a plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said destination information; and

said plurality of circulation clients for sequentially circulating said document file, transmitted by said transmission client, each comprising:

a) a transmission processing ~~means for sending~~unit which sends said circulation information file and said document file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said destination information, in response to a verification of said document file,

wherein when the next one of plurality of circulation clients is incapable of circulation, said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients, conducts at least one of (1) notifying incapability of circulation by said next one of said plurality of circulation clients to other ones of said plurality of circulation clients or said transmission client, (2) sending said document file and said circulation information file to other one of said plurality of circulation clients next to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients, (3) sending said document file and said circulation information file to a proxy client of said next one of said plurality of circulation clients.

2. (Original) The work flow system of claim 1, one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends a transmission completion report, regardless of said document file, to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients.

3. (Original) The work flow system of claim 2, wherein said transmission completion report is sent to a predetermined server in said network; and said predetermined server sends circulation state information in response to a request from one of said transmission client and said plurality of circulation clients.

4. (Original) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said circulation information file includes report destination information regarding a reporting destination of said transmission completion report.

5. (Original) The work flow system of claim 4, wherein said one of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends said transmission completion report, regardless of said document file, to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients in accordance with said report destination information.

6. (Original) The work flow system of claim 5, wherein said reporting destination is a server for controlling a circulation of said document file; said one of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends said transmission completion report to said server; and said server sends circulation state information in response to a request from one of said transmission client and said plurality of circulation clients in accordance with said transmission completion report.

7. (Original) The work flow system of claim 6, wherein said circulation state information includes a state to which one of said plurality of circulation clients said document file for

circulation is circulated, or a state with which one of said plurality of circulation clients said document file is confirmed.

8. (Original) The work flow system of claim 5, wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients and having received said transmission completion report, deletes or makes it possible to delete said document file and said circulation information file from a memory portion.

9. (Original) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said circulation information file includes storage location information of a storage destination after the circulation of said document file; and one of said plurality of circulation clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, stores said document file to said storage destination in said storage location information in response to a approval operation of said document file.

10. (Currently Amended) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said document file for circulation is created from an original document file stored in a predetermined storage; said circulation information file includes original information of a storage destination of said original document and storage location information of a storage destination after the circulation of said document file; and one of said plurality of circulation clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, obtains said original document file in response to a ~~approval~~approval operation of said document file in accordance with said original information, and stores said original document to said storage destination of said storage location information.

11. (Original) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said one of plurality of circulation clients, having received said document file and circulation information file, adds history information including a verification result of said document file to said circulation information file and sends said document file and circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients.

12. (Currently Amended) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said circulation information file includes time limit information for circulation time limit of said document file; and said one of plurality of circulation clients, having received said document file and circulation information file, requests ~~a approval~~ an approval operation of said document file when said circulation time limit of said time limit information is expired.

13. (Original) The work flow system of claim 1, said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, sending said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, encrypts said document file before sending said document file.

14-16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, having received said document file and said circulation information file, adds correction information, for making a correction on said document file, to said circulation information file and sends said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality circulation clients.

18. (Currently Amended) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein one of said plurality of circulation clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, sends circulation completion report to other ones of said plurality of circulation clients in response to a ~~approval~~ an approval operation of said document file.

19. (Currently Amended) The work flow system of claim 1, wherein said transmission client or each of said plurality of circulation clients comprises:

an information processing ~~means for processing~~ unit which processes electronic information; and

a storage ~~means for storing~~unit which stores a file which is readable with said information processing ~~means~~unit;

wherein said storage ~~means~~unit stores said document file or said circulation information file when said document file or said circulation information file is received.

20. (Currently Amended) The work flow system of claim 19, wherein said transmission client or each of said plurality of circulation clients comprises a display ~~means for displaying~~unit which displays a transmission button and sends said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said circulation information file, so as to be stored in said storage ~~means~~unit of said next one of said plurality of circulation clients in response to an operation of said transmission button.

21-44. (Canceled)

45. (New) A computer readable recording medium in which software is recorded, a computer executing the software carries out the steps of:

receiving a document to be circulated among a plurality of destinations in a predetermined order from one of the destinations and an originator of the circulation;

(1) determining a next destination of the document;

(2) determining if the next destination is capable of circulating the document to a successive destination;

(3) carrying out at least one of the following steps, if it is determined that the next destination is incapable of circulation:

(3-1) sending the document to at least one of the successive destination and a proxy of the next destination; and

(3-2) sending a report to at least one of an originator of the circulation and destinations of the circulation a fact that the next destination is incapable circulation.

46. (New) The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 45, wherein circulating information on the destinations and the predetermined order is attached to the document, and the next destination is determined in the step (1) in accordance with the attached circulating information.

47. (New) The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 45, wherein the circulating information on the destinations and the predetermined order has been set by the originator.

48. (New) A computer readable recording medium in which software is recorded, a computer executing the software carries out the steps of:

(1) setting up circulation information of a document, the circulation information including an order of the circulation among a plurality of destinations;

(2) determining if a first one of the destinations to which the computer is to send the document is capable of circulating the document to a second one of the destinations;

(3) sending, if it is determined that the first one of the destinations is incapable of circulation, the document and the circulation information to at least one of the second one of the destinations and a proxy of the first one of the destinations.